



News Release
For Immediate Release
January 13, 2017

The Reach starts Canada's 150th with Decolonization and Re/conciliation Exhibitions and Programming

(Abbotsford, BC) –On January 26, The Reach Gallery Museum opens five new exhibitions for the Winter/Spring Season. To acknowledge Canada's 150th year of confederation, programming at The Reach is inspired by the words of Justice Murray Sinclair, "Reconciliation is not an Aboriginal problem, it is a Canadian problem. It involves all of us." The first season of exhibitions for 2017 addresses concepts of decolonization and reconciliation and explores emergent attitudes and ideas that will inform a healthier collective future for settler/Indigenous relationships. The opening reception for these thought-provoking exhibitions takes place on Thursday, January 26. The event is free to the public and visitors are cordially invited to kick off an exciting new year at The Reach.

The opening reception also marks the launch of an important online exhibition that is sure to appeal to anyone with an interest in the heritage and culture of the Fraser Valley. ***Sq'ewlets: A Stó:lō -Coast Salish Community in the Fraser River Valley*** is both an exhibition and a significant online project developed by Sq'ewlets community members in partnership with collaborators from several disciplines. Both the exhibition and the website introduce visitors to an in-depth perspective of what it means to be a Sq'ewlets person and community member today. Both platforms prominently feature the Halq'eméylem language and share Sq'ewlets' views on self-representation and ownership of cultural heritage. The overall project stems from a collaborative relationship formed 25 years ago between Chief Clarence Pennier of Sq'ewlets, Archaeology Professor Michael Blake of UBC, and researchers at Stó:lō Nation. A partnership was formed in 1992 to excavate, examine, understand, and protect the ancestral archaeological resources at one of the Sq'ewlets community's primary ancestral sites, Qithyil. The Sq'ewlets community has played a central role in collaborative community-based archaeology in BC, and has translated this knowledge into an accessible exhibition and website that address many of the recommendations outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The exhibition, which is based on the website, was developed by Kate Hennessy, David M. Schaepe, Aynur Kadir, Natasha Lyons, and Colin Pennier with the Sq'ewlets Advisory Group. The website was achieved with funding from the Virtual Museum of Canada's Virtual Exhibits investment program. The Virtual Museum of Canada's Virtual Exhibits investment program helps Canadian museums and heritage organizations develop virtual exhibits and resources that engage online audiences in Canada's History and Culture.



In ***Grand Theft Terra Firma***, Fraser Valley artists David Campion and Sandra Shields use photography, text and installation to reframe the settlement of Canada as a complex heist masterminded by criminals in

London and played out in Stó:lō territory by a gang of greedy thieves. Using satire and humor as entry points into difficult knowledge, the exhibition takes the shape of an immersive strategy guide to an imaginary video game. The works include large-scale, fictionalized photo-portraits which describe the colonial “players” involved in the heist. In addition, digitally-composed photographic vignettes resembling “screen shots” represent key moments in local history. Installation elements, like a recreated early 20th Century photographer’s studio, connect the physical space of the gallery to the photographs in the exhibition. Blending fictional characters with elements drawn from historical record, audiences are challenged to consider their relationship to destructive colonial practices. Shields comes to the subject of colonization as the great-granddaughter of early Alberta settlers, while Campion approaches from the vantage of a recent British immigrant who grew up in southern Africa during the era that saw colonial governments fall.

Poison, Pattern, Paradigm premieres work by emerging Coast Salish artist Carrielynn Victor (Xemontélót) of Cheam First Nation. The artist has created two new bodies of work for the exhibition: a series of paintings utilizing traditional formal elements from Stó:lō culture, and a collection of mixed media works inspired by cultural and biological dimensions of the stinging nettle. The works recount aspects of Stó:lō stories and worldview, while simultaneously drawing from her lived experience and our collective immersion in popular culture. Victor is an artist, fisher, plant harvester and medicines practitioner of mixed ancestry whose work fuses ancestral knowledge and a deep connection to her culture with contemporary techniques and styles. Her practice considers gender and sexuality, community, interconnectedness, land, and sustainability.

Calgary-based artist Lyndl Hall examines the role of the red brick building in colonial expansion in ***Stretchers, Headers & Footnotes***. Hall’s research is based on two case studies: the Clayburn/Kilgard brickworks of the Fraser Valley, and the City Hall in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu Natal, South Africa, considered the largest red brick building in the southern hemisphere. These disparate sites mirror the establishment of British rule through industry, bureaucracy, and architecture. Brick is both a literal and figurative building block for an empire fashioned out of the clay of foreign lands. The exhibition, which draws heavily on the Archives of The Reach as well as the Pietermaritzburg Archives, consists of a series of drawings, a book work, and installation elements that consider the materials that document and stand for the processes of colonization.

The fifth exhibition to open on January 26th is ***Art on Demand 3.1*** which features the work of emerging artist Desiree Patterson, and is curated by Chantelle Fawcett. ***Art on Demand*** is a series of exhibitions in a flexible space that features the work of artists and curators who are members of the Emerge program at The Reach (which supports aspiring professionals between the ages of 18-35). Patterson is a Canadian photographic artist, originating from Langley, British Columbia. A self-taught artist, Patterson is dedicated to creating artwork that highlights the fundamental, human connection to the natural world, in attempts to foster awareness for the importance of environmental preservation. Fawcett, a member of Emerge and UFV curatorial intern at The Reach Gallery Museum adds, “Desirée is a talented emerging artist whose work asks viewers



to make connections between contemporary culture and how the natural world is changing and evolving around us.”

The Winter/Spring 2017 season will be augmented by an extensive series of programs and events that connect to the topics of decolonization and reconciliation. These include a Brunch with the Artists (February 4th, 10:30 am), responsive performances developed by the talented faculty and students at the UFV Theatre department, community discussions and exhibition tours, and more. For more information about the wide variety of upcoming programs, visit: thereach.ca. Public programming associated with the Winter/Spring season is made possible by the Community Fund for Canada’s 150th, a collaboration between Abbotsford Community Foundation, The City of Abbotsford, the Government of Canada, and extraordinary leaders from coast to coast to coast, and through funding from the Hamber Foundation.

Join The Reach team, meet the artists, and enjoy tasty refreshments as we kick off this invigorating celebration of regional culture at The Reach (32388 Veterans Way, Abbotsford) on January 26th at 6:00 pm.

For more details on these exhibitions and
About The Reach Gallery Museum Abbotsford

The Reach is a registered charity, operated by a small staff team with the assistance of a Board of Directors and 100+ volunteers. With your support, we will continue to develop and present the best in the visual arts by local to international artists, preserve and share the stories of our rich and diverse cultural heritage, provide engaging multidisciplinary public programming for all ages and offer FREE admission to exhibitions and a wide range of other cultural events.

-30-

Attached images with credits:

David Campion & Sandra Shields. *The Royal Engineer*, 2015, Inkjet print, 30 x 40”

Sq’ewlets youth in the Golden Eagles Canoe Club, led by Sonny and Chrystal-Lee Williams of the Sq’ewlets First Nation. Summer, 2014. Photograph by Aynur Kadir.

Media Contact for Exhibitions:

Laura Schneider, Executive Director & Curator, The Reach

Email: lschneider@thereach.ca T: 604-864-8087 x125